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### See the person, not the stereotype

"Historical events have created a stereotype that needs to be deconstructed." **Leonie Joseph**

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"The level of food waste from supermarkets is unjust and amounts to criminality." **Thomas Day**



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# CORRUPTION REOPENED

TWENTY YEARS AFTER FITZGERALD, WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

By Mardi Lumsden

"A WATERSHED in the history and culture of Queensland". That is how ethicist and retired Uniting Church minister Rev Dr Noel Preston described the Fitzgerald Inquiry.

The judicial inquiry by Tony Fitzgerald QC found extensive political and police corruption in Queensland and the Report went to Parliament twenty years ago this month, on 3 July 1989.

"Fitzgerald emerged at a pivotal time," said Dr Preston. "His inquiry gave Queensland a chance to renew and rediscover democracy.

"We became a more tolerant and open society and all public institutions, not just the police force, were challenged to reform and become more accountable."

The 1986 Commonwealth Games and World Expo '88 put Queensland on the map, partly the Bjelke-Peterson government's doing.

At the time the Uniting Church was the 'new kid on the block' and Dr Preston said under the leadership of Prof Rollie Busch the church strove to fight injustice.

Church groups such as Concerned Christians and Action for World Development flew the flag of protest and a theologically informed dissent during the 1970s and 1980s.

For many Christians standing up against a government that had banned public protest without a permit, ignored a wide range of human and civil rights, and labelled Christian dissidents as communists was a matter of personal morality.

Oxley Uniting Church member Frank Putland was Principal of the Queensland Police Academy from 1976 to 1983,

charged by Police Commissioner Ray Whitrod with changing the police culture.

They were interesting and tough times for a man who spent his life asking, 'How would Jesus have gone about this?'

"It can be an exhausting business, because I've never found the escape clause where he accepted that near enough was good enough," he said.

"We who try it must never forget that the carpenter of Nazareth trod a rockier path among more hostile adversaries than we can even conceive."

As a result, Mr Putland was accused of being "a religious teetotaler" who expected the Academy to be run to unattainable moral and ethical standards.

"Probably the harshest lesson ... was that people with whom I worked, negotiated, advised, socialised, shared morning tea, trusted (and I thought was trusted by) over a number of years were, quite simply, uncommon criminals.

Director of the University of Queensland Pro Bono Centre Dr Tamara Walsh said the Fitzgerald Inquiry heralded a new sense of hope for marginalised people.

"It recognised the enormous impact that policing culture can have on the lives of those who are vulnerable," she said.

Dr Walsh said we currently find ourselves in a similar situation to that met by Fitzgerald 20 years ago.

"As Christians, it is our mandate to protect the alien, the fatherless and the widow.

"If we stand by, then how will we answer to our God?"

# Navigating the financial crisis

WHEN I was told that this month's *Journey* would take a retrospective look at the Fitzgerald Inquiry years, I found myself remembering the painful period that led up to that Inquiry and the impact upon the Uniting Church in Queensland.

In 1986, John Harrison took a look at the first 10 years of the life of the Uniting Church and entitled the book *Baptism of Fire* and that is certainly how it felt.

The pain of those first 10 years came from our attempt to express the gospel we were struggling with the relationship between the mission of the church and the social and political structures of our nation.

We gained a reputation as a church that took social justice seriously, was willing to address issues that affected our whole community and attempted to bear witness to God's reign.

Today we face a different experience of pain.

The pain we now face is one of our own making.

We had hoped the Uniting Church Investment Service (U.C.I.S.) would produce enough money to pay for the work of the Synod, allowing the contributions to the Mission and Service Fund (which come from congregations) to be used to fund

Presbyteries and the mission grants to congregations and faith communities.

This led to some risky investments which proved faulty.

When compounded by the Global Financial Crisis we now find ourselves in a situation where U.C.I.S. cannot provide money to the Mission and Service Fund.

This led to the decision to cease funding a number of Synod appointments.

The danger is that in these difficult times we want to withdraw and protect what is left.

**Now is the time for us, as the Body of Christ, to take bold new steps in serving God's mission.**

We try to retreat and hold onto what we believe is ours, to regain our sense of security.

When we respond like that we show that we are looking for our safety and security in the god of mammon.

However it is the god of mammon that has failed us, not the God who sent the son that we might live.

Despite human sinfulness which led to our turning away from God, God has not turned away from us.

Instead "while we were still sinners Christ died for us".

God acted generously and invited us into a new reconciled relationship with God and with one another.

When we feel as though we are in the far country, facing famine and living on scraps, we need to turn our face towards home.

We need to take seriously our place as children of God, entrusted with a mission as servants with Jesus Christ.

While many predicted the demise of the Uniting Church

in Queensland because of our stand for justice and those who were treated poorly, the opposite happened.

In our attempt to proclaim the truths of Christ in wider social and political circles we were seen as people seeking, however imperfectly, to live out our calling.

According to Mark's Gospel, Jesus said, "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it."

## Message from the Moderator

Rev Bruce Johnson



Now is the time for us, as the Body of Christ, to take bold new steps in serving God's mission.

Rather than becoming protective of our past and holding onto what we believe is ours, we need to act generously and passionately to see God's reconciling work fulfilled in and through us.

I was excited at the last Synod when, on hearing of the financial situation we faced, people responded thoughtfully and prayerfully asking, "How can we help?"

Part of the response was to launch an immediate appeal inviting 1000 individuals or congregations to each contribute \$1000.

That appeal has raised over \$100 000 so far; further generosity would make a significant difference.

We need to see an increase in giving by individuals and congregations to the Mission and Service Fund.

This is the fund that enables the Synod to provide theological

education for lay and ordained members; it funds the financial and property services that support the Church's mission; it funds the Office of Moderator and General Secretary and it funds the Presbyteries.

All of these areas have been significantly reduced in the past 12 months.

We also need to make all under utilised property available to the Synod so that it can be sold or used in new ways to serve the mission of God.

We have a tremendous amount of property that we have received from generations before us that we regard as ours by right.

We need to recapture the vision and passion for the Kingdom of God that our forebears had and not simply believe that keeping the church doors open is the same as sharing with Christ in making God's reign known in our midst.

While we are "on the way together" we can only continue if we reflect the love and generosity with which God has dealt with us.

## Globalising Fitzgerald

FIRSTLY, MY special thanks go to John Harrison, Don Whebell, Greg Mackay, and all who contributed to this edition.

During researching the Fitzgerald era I came to understand that despite (and perhaps due to) the Fitzgerald Inquiry, the majority of Australians live in a society fairly free from corruption.

However, there are many issues Fitzgerald brought up for the church to grapple with: issues of Christian activism, our responsibility to stand for justice for the disadvantaged, and the call to 'love our neighbour'.

And if we are called to respond the injustices in our own society, we can then also recognise injustices in other parts of the world.

Perhaps we can uphold Fitzgerald's reforms and

suggestions on a global scale.

No child should be held in an adult prison yet girls in Afghanistan are forbidden an education and children in the Congo work in conditions of slavery so we can enjoy a chocolate bar.

Who will make a public protest like members of our church did in the 1980s?

Where are the revolutionary voices of the Uniting Church in Queensland? Who will stand up for righteousness?

I know you are out there.

Mardi Lumsden  
Editor



## Sign of the times *Journey* launches blog site

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

It may only be July but it is time to start preparing for Christmas already.

Once again the Synod Communication Services Unit will produce high quality, low cost Christmas postcards for congregations throughout Queensland.

This year we want your help deciding on the theme!

We are looking for a positive, innovative and poignant message to encourage people to explore the true meaning of Christmas and to invite them to attend their local Uniting Church during the Christmas season.

Tell us your ideas by simply logging on to the new Journey-Online blog site at <http://blog.journeyonline.com.au>.

[blog.journeyonline.com.au](http://blog.journeyonline.com.au).

You can also comment on other people's ideas and let us know which slogans you think would best promote the Uniting Church this Christmas.

The blog site is a place for in-depth discussion and innovative ideas about the Church and faith, as well as a place to connect with other creative thinkers in the Church.

Have your say now! Visit <http://blog.journeyonline.com.au>.





# Brave Scots praised for fire escape

By Mardi Lumsden

STAFF AND students of Scots PGC College in Warwick have been praised for their quick response to an early morning fire that destroyed one of the junior boys' boarding houses in June.

The alarm was raised just before 3am on Saturday 13 June when one 14-year-old boy saw flames next to the bed of his roommate.

He woke his roommate up and together they woke the rest of the dormitory and sounded the fire alarm.

A deaf student was led to safety by a classmate and they waited in near freezing temperatures for a quick response from the local fire department.

A staff member organised shoes and clothes for the boys who left everything to escape the inferno.

College principal Michael

Harding said if it were not for the quick thinking of staff and students the result could have been much worse.

"I can't praise the boys enough for their quick thinking and leadership," he told *The Sunday Mail*.

Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Warwick station officer Dennis Burton also praised the school's fire drill practices.

"The quick thinking of the students and their actions in the initial stages of the fire averted what could have been a tragedy," he told *The Chronicle*.

"They regularly practise fire drills and it certainly paid off. The children knew what to do.

"It was extremely lucky that nobody was hurt."

Principal Mr Harding said the College's system of alerting parents of events via text message



What remains of the junior boys' boarding house at Scots PGC College after the June fire. Photo by Bruce Johnson

meant that within an hour all parents were contacted and told that their sons were safe.

Moderator Bruce Johnson visited the College one day after the blaze to meet with Mr Harding and members of staff and the College Council.

"I was shocked at the extent of the destruction and greatly relieved to know that all students and staff escaped from the building unharmed," said Mr Johnson.

"It is a tribute to the local Fire Service that, given the obvious intensity of the fire, it was contained and that other

buildings close by were not seriously damaged.

"I was impressed by the way the staff, College Council and students were coping."

Students spoke with counsellors the morning after the fire and parents have been told to be alert to their children coming to terms with the destruction of all their worldly possessions including computers, clothes, photos and much more.

The destroyed dormitory is one of the newest at the College.

The affected students started their winter holidays a little early, but the College has assured

parents there is enough space to accommodate the boys next semester.

The Insurance Program for the College, underwritten by Ansvr Insurance, does not specifically include cover for personal property of boarders. However, Ansvr has given considerable thought to how to best help parents who have sustained losses as a result of the fire.

Although Ansvr has no legal responsibility to do so, it has generously made allowance for some financial assistance to be provided to the families of students for items lost in the fire.

## Moderator lauds Blue Care's iconic feat

QUEENSLAND SYNOD moderator Rev Bruce Johnson commended Blue Care's outstanding achievement as the only institution to be named a 2009 Queensland Great and Q150 Queensland Icon for its significant role in the history and development of Australia's Smart State.

The non-profit organisation which is a missional arm of the Uniting Church was presented with these awards as part of the 2009 Queensland Week celebrations held in June.

Blue Care is one of only four institutions to make the list since it began in 2001.

Mr Johnson said the awards were a tribute to thousands of staff and volunteers, who give their time to meet the real needs of millions across the state.

"It is heartening to think that this ministry which began as a few people in a congregation seeking to meet a local need has now been recognised and I want

to congratulate everyone who has been part of this amazing community service over its long history," he said.

Blue Care executive director

Stephen Muggleton said the awards strengthened Blue Care's position as Australia's largest not-for-profit provider of community health and residential aged care.

"As one of Queensland's largest employers we're truly grateful for the recognition of our hardworking nurses and support staff," he said.

"Their tireless commitment to caring for the elderly, people with a disability and others in need is significant – they not only help people remain independent in their homes, they play an integral part in maintaining the social fabric of Queensland by keeping families and communities together."

Blue Care has grown from humble beginnings, with just one nurse in 1953 to almost 10 000 staff and volunteers working in

more than 260 locations across Queensland.

The organisation has extended its services to provide nursing, personal care, allied health support, domestic assistance and social support as well as a range of in-home and centre-based respite, nursing homes, palliative care and carer support programs.

"With Australia's rapidly ageing population, the services Blue Care provides are even more important today than they were 56 years ago," said Mr Muggleton.

"With the number of people aged 80 and over expected to double in the next 20 years, demand for aged care is set to skyrocket.

"Blue Care will be there continuing to deliver care that is personal, trusted and compassionate."



Photo courtesy of Blue Care

## We're listening

Find out how your opinions are making a difference. The report from focus groups with Uniting Church Treasurers is now available. Visit [www.ucis.com.au](http://www.ucis.com.au) to download your copy.



# On a lucerne mission from God



Janice Hurford, Kate Shorten and friend lend a helping hand. Photo by Graeme Cobb

By Iven Hewett

LONG-TIME Blue Care employee and Uniting Church member Athol Cobb is doing something big for farmers in fire ravaged Victoria.

After World War II Mr Cobb worked on a dairy farm in Victoria's Gippsland and now he is returning to give a hand to people who have lost nearly everything in the recent Victorian bushfires.

In June, Mr Cobb and son Graeme left Chinchilla for Victoria loaded up with 100 bales of prime lucerne hay for people around the Bunyip and district parish who were in need of assistance to feed their farm animals.

"I thought it is something we can do and if I was going to give something away I wanted to give good quality hay," said Mr Cobb.

"We haven't had bushfires but we've been in drought and it's good to know you have support.

"Many people are helping and we know what it's like."

In Victoria, Bunyip and District Uniting Church minister Rev Ann Simons organised with Kate Shorten to distribute the lucerne hay.

Each bale of prime lucerne hay was added to five bales of a lesser quality hay so that as many people as possible could benefit from the Cobb's generous donation.

Chinchilla-Brigalow Uniting Church donated money to pay for the fuel required for the trip.

Ms Shorten said the community was overwhelmed by the generosity of the Cobb family and the Chinchilla-Brigalow Uniting Church.

"It is with gratitude that the many horse families in Labertouche thank you," she said.

"Life is getting back to a more normal pace, however the pasture that has been burned will need many more months to recover."

Iven Hewett is a Community Minister at Chinchilla / Brigalow Uniting Church

## Deacon seeks world vision

By Matt Gees

WORLD VISION Australia CEO Rev Tim Costello was the guest of the South Moreton Presbytery recently at the induction of Bob Mitchell as a Deacon Intern.

Mr Mitchell has taken up a placement at World Vision Australia's head office in

Melbourne as the head of Legal, Risk and Governance using his experience as a lawyer to further the ministry of World Vision.

"It involves my being the head of World Vision Australia's legal department with responsibility for risk prevention, making sure things like insurances are current, undertaking peer reviews of staff, ensuring all the Australian processes comply with international standards and then reporting back to the board," said Mr Mitchell.

He is also the Child Protection Officer of World Vision Australia and will be part of the executive involved with the vision and strategy of the organisation.

In June Mr Mitchell spent two weeks in Zimbabwe for an operational review of the World Vision staff there.

On top of these jobs Mr Mitchell, as a Uniting Church Deacon, has a responsibility to live out God's call on his life to specified ministry.

"I will be undertaking preaching deputation work in churches.

"Tim (Costello) gets hundreds of requests for speaking engagements every week and is not physically able to honour them all, so there will be opportunity there for me to preach.

"World Vision has over 600 staff at the head office with staff devotions every week.

"I will also be engaging with the theological discussion group that World Vision has, helping with leadership of prayer groups and obviously also having a sacramental presence in all of this."

Mr Mitchell's intern phase of ministry was officially recognised at a packed service hosted by the Wellers Hill Tarragindi congregation where Mr Mitchell and his family were worshipping members.

Tim Costello shared his excitement at having Mr Mitchell on the World Vision Australia team and thanked the community for "allowing" him to relocate to Melbourne.



Bob Mitchell.  
Photo by Mardi Lumsden

## Letting them eat cake

By Mardi Lumsden

TEA, SCONES and much, much more were consumed all over the state this May as part of Australia's Biggest Morning Tea to raise funds for the Cancer Council Queensland.

Many Uniting Church groups and agencies served up platters of delectable delights in the name of fundraising.

Blue Care Caboolture teamed up with the Morayfield Uniting Church in putting on a morning tea for around 100 people and raising over \$1000.

Blue Care Caboolture Intake Officer Sue Gossage said a number of the attendees were Blue Care

clients from Mobile Day Respite.

"Whilst we supplied transport for some of our clients, the majority came by themselves and it was great to see them support Blue Care and the Cancer Council in this way," she said.

Money was raised through a gold coin donation for attending the event, as well as by personal donations from the Blue Care Caboolture staff and a 'guessing competition' held in the week leading up to the morning tea with prizes, coffee and cakes donated by local business.

U.C.I.S also hosted a morning tea at the Queensland Synod office which raised \$325 for the Cancer Council Queensland.



Enjoying the Biggest Morning Tea hosted by Morayfield Uniting Church and Blue Care Caboolture.  
Photo courtesy of Blue Care



A rolling mist at sunrise!

### Why Can Christians Feel Defeated?

Each year many thousand Christians around the world will reach a point of defeat in their lives. This may be evidenced through emotions such as stress, failure, anxiety, despair or burnout. "Breaking Free" is presented by Abiding Life Ministries International and is based on research gained from counselling thousands of people around the world. It is a Bible based live-in workshop that will take you on a journey of discovery as we look at why we may experience these emotions before developing an understanding of the abundant life that God intended for us. These workshops are informal, interactive and non-threatening and it could change your life forever.

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# Alistair Macrae: New President

New Uniting Church President Alistair Macrae. Photo by Paddy Macrae and courtesy of Crosslight

By Meera Atkinson

HE HAS worked as a bar tender, almost became a Taizé monk, calls himself a “mainstream Uniting Church *Basis of Union*” man, a “broken down footballer who didn’t know when to retire” and was once jailed for participating in a protest blockade of the Franklin River (he has no criminal record as Bob Hawke subsequently cleared the activists). Meet Rev Alistair Macrae, the next President of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Mr Macrae, aged 52, lives in Melbourne with his wife, Clare, a writer, and three of his four children.

Raised by a minister father, Mr Macrae grew up in rural Victoria

before the family moved to Melbourne.

As a young man he took time out of his arts degree to travel around Europe, spending a year at the Taizé community when he was 19.

Having completed his arts degree Mr Macrae was called to ministry.

Following his Dublin-based post-graduate studies he served in three congregational placements in Victoria and chaired the Assembly Sexuality Task group between 1992 and 1997.

He was Moderator of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania and a young adult discipleship educator before taking the helm as Executive Director for the Centre

for Theology and Ministry, where he has spent the past five years.

Mr Macrae’s choice of the Living Water Thirsty Land theme for the 12th Assembly was inspired by a photo of a 4WD Ute in *The Age*. Two young people were found dead under their Ute in outback Australia having run out of petrol and then water.

Afterwards, local Indigenous people said if the travellers had known where to look they would have found life-giving water within 200 metres of where they were stranded.

For Mr Macrae this story spoke to the nature and mission of the church.

“The church as witness to living water is a very energising

image to me,” he said. However, he admitted that he will assume the Presidency at a testing time for the church.

“Mainstream churches in Australia and elsewhere are in a crisis situation.

“Do we go into shutdown and fear mode, or consider that maybe God wants us to do and be something different?

“Our position in society has radically changed.

“Most of us see the threat in that but we need, as a church, to see the opportunities.

“I want to say, ‘Park the fear and trust God.’ It’s about what mindset we bring to the current crisis.”

Mr Macrae said reconciliation

is another big challenge and that the Uniting Church needs to strengthen its partnership with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress to model reconciliation within our own life.

Environmental issues confront the whole of society and Mr Macrae said the Christian church needs to offer stronger leadership.

He also identified that the “multi-cultural reality” of the church needed attention.

He added that partner church and ecumenical relationships are also important as is the development of appropriate and effective approaches to evangelism.

## NCYC lives on

By Meera Atkinson

FOR THE ‘true believers’ who attended the National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC) National Consultation recently, the future of the event looked uncertain.

Held in Adelaide in May, the consultation was convened to discuss the viability of the biennial Convention. With dwindling numbers and intensive organisational needs in recent years, it was thought that continuing it into the future may not be feasible.

However, fears were soon allayed by a firm recommitment to the event by those at the consultation.

In particular, the young people in attendance, to whom NCYC is targeted, affirmed it as a vital chance to be challenged and encouraged in their faith.

Sandy Boyce, National Faith

Development Consultant for the National Assembly, said the continuing need for NCYC was particularly expressed by young people from the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and migrant communities.

“Of the 880 in attendance at NCYC 2009, some 300 (34%) were from other cultural backgrounds,” said Ms Boyce. “It makes us reflect on how we organise it and who we organise it for.”

The primary aim of NCYC is to encourage a deeper relationship with God and to offer an experience of being part of a community of faith, active service and witness. It is also an occasion for young people to discover Christian faith for the first time.

However NCYC has felt the pressure of changing times.

“It’s an awesome event to organise,” said Ms Boyce.

“It takes at least three years,

requires many volunteers, and then the host synod has to bear the cost.

“The 11th Assembly decision to discontinue the Specified Ministry of Youth Worker has left that area diminished.

“The network of Youth Workers isn’t there in the same way and some synods have had to cut positions so there’s a sense that the natural building blocks that would have been a foundation for NCYC have moved.”

But the re-imagining of NCYC that is now taking place may provide one solution.

“If we continued to use the model we’ve had up until now I think we’d all be prepared to say NCYC has had its life and let’s put it to bed,” Ms Boyce said.

“But the consultation has really invigorated the concept.”

The shift is to see NCYC as a movement not just an event.

“There will be monthly gatherings and there’s an idea for young people to gather for a weekend of intentional training, resourcing and coaching.

NCYC 2011, to be held on the Gold Coast, is already shaping up to be a new-style NCYC.

“It will be located at one venue, so there’s no transport, the idea being to build a community on site.

“The program will have a lot more fluidity and there will be a greater seeking of collaboration.”

“There’s recognition that we want more continuity and to collaborate more nationally with agencies, groups and networks along with a local logistics team.”

NCYC 2011 looks set to bring the convention back better than ever.

“NCYC 2011 is accessible financially and to different cultural groups and I hope people will give it a high priority,” said Ms Boyce.

“We don’t want people to come along simply to be numbers at NCYC – we want their presence to impact on the way we do the event so young people can engage meaningfully together.”



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# See the person, not the stereotype

By Priscilla Raepom

THIS YEAR'S National Reconciliation Week held last month marked its 13th anniversary with the theme, 'See the person, not the stereotype'.

The event offers an opportunity for all Australians to focus on reconciliation and celebrate the rich culture and history of Indigenous Australians.

It is a time to reflect on achievements and to renew

commitments to reconciliation.

*Journey* asked the following people their views on the national event.

Full story at [www.journeyonline.com.au](http://www.journeyonline.com.au)

## What do you think of the culture and history of Indigenous Australians?

*Vince Ross, National Chairperson of Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress*

"I strongly believe that the Creator gave us our land and our language and the responsibility to care for this nation.

"We have been dehumanised by government policies

that fail to recognise and value our contribution to this land in the way we have maintained it for thousand of years.

"It is the oldest living culture in the world and to this very day can provide the answer to many of the social, physical and spiritual issues that people face in these times.

"I value our culture in this 21st century that continues to be proactive in the way it challenges people to turn away from a materialistic society to a holistic way of life that is sustainable."



Vince Ross

## How do you see the aspirations of reconciliation coming to fruition in the future?

*Richard Cassidy, Youth Families and Community Coordinator, The Gap Uniting Church, Brisbane*

"In 1998 I was part of a delegation of six senior students (three Indigenous and three non Indigenous) from Bundamba Secondary College to attend the first National Youth Reconciliation Conference in Darwin.

"The conference inspired the Bundamba students and

staff to hold a State Schools' conference in the Ipswich region in 1999.

"I still have vivid memories of the closing ceremony where the student assembly broke out in song with 'Oh Happy Day'.

"I visited the school a couple of weeks ago and met a member of the Indigenous community who remarked on the positive environment at the school and spoke of the platform laid down many years ago.

"To come together is not easy.

"There is a cost, sometimes financial, sometimes to give and take in other ways for all parties.

"For the school at Bundamba that investment in those six students meant a return 100 fold in positives and it laid a spirit of willingness to overcome cultural diversity by staff and students.

"It seems reconciliation can work if all parties are willing to participate."

## What does this year's theme 'See the person, not the stereotype' mean for you?

*Leonie Joseph, Counsellor, Indigenous Family Care Service, Lifeline Coral Coast Capricorn, Bundaberg*

"Historical events have created a stereotype that needs to be deconstructed and reconstructed to value the traditional past and to sustain the cultural identity into the future.

"There have been many successes and achievements which have been the result of positive government policies and positive community attitudes and actions.

"As a nation Australia needs to be encouraged to see our Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders as individuals and

to challenge the stereotypical perception, by acknowledging that time is needed to reflect and understand, to heal and to respectfully seek solutions together."



Leonie Joseph

## How did you feel when you heard the National Apology to the Stolen Generation by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd at last year's event?

*Damien Conley, Principal Advisor Rural and Remote Services, Blue Care, Brisbane*

"The National Apology was an incredibly moving event for me and when the Prime Minister said, 'For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry'. For me this was a poignant moment in Australia's history.

"At Blue Care we have worked tirelessly to make our Indigenous Care Strategy a success.

"The commitment and willingness within our organisation to take up the challenge to commit to redressing the unacceptable 17-year life gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples makes me extremely proud to be a part of Blue Care."

## What can Australians do to strengthen reconciliation in their own communities?

*Rae Mavor, retired ESL and Multicultural Education Teacher, Gold Coast*

"It is important to know ourselves and our attitudes,

to grasp opportunities big or small and to speak out when attitudes of prejudice show themselves, even among friends and family.

## How can we better learn from Indigenous people?

*Dr Robert Bos, Director of Pilgrim Learning Community*

"It takes time to befriend people and get to know them. I have invariably found people to be gracious, hospitable

and, with a little time and encouragement, begin to share their lives and their stories.

"Get to know an Indigenous person. You will be enriched and humbled."

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## What do you think are some problems hindering the reconciliation process?

*Rev Jan Whyte, Congregation Minister, St Paul's - Mackay Uniting Church, Mackay*

"Reconciliation breaks down when we are blinkered by fear of what we do not know, when we fail to engage in open communication that banishes fear, ignorance and distrust, and when we forget it is a two way process. We need to celebrate our unity as God's sons and daughters."



Jan Whyte

## IF THE SHOE FITS...



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# Issues unaddressed

By Mardi Lumsden

17-YEAR-OLDS have no place in adult prisons, the Queensland Synod reminded the Queensland Government in May 2007, but still no action has been taken to implement a policy recommended in the landmark Fitzgerald Report twenty years ago this month.

UnitingCare Queensland Director Anne Cross, and former Synod Social Justice Advocate Andrew Johnson, told the 2007 Synod that keeping 17-year-olds in adult prisons defied international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and that State legislation to

stop the act was passed in 1992.

In 1987 Siyavash Doostkhah had arrived in Queensland from Iran to a state abuzz with reform and a desire for openness and accountability.

Now, as the Director of the Youth Affairs Network Queensland, he is frustrated with the lack of response to the Fitzgerald Report.

"For 23 years I have been dumbfounded by the lack of adherence to Fitzgerald's recommendations," he said.

"They didn't invest for the magnitude of change required. There is no safety for people to be whistleblowers. They scapegoated a few top cops then left it at that.

"The culture remained the same; we need to target the culture.

"The issue of 17-year-olds in adult prison is one example of the things neglected.

"It demonstrates the ethical bankruptcy of the system."

But the Inquiry did lead to many positive reforms including Freedom of Information legislation, Judicial Review, the creation of the Criminal Justice Commission (later the Crime and Misconduct Commission or CMC) and the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission (EARC).

Legal Aid Queensland Chair

Marg O'Donnell said these changes provided, "great processes for government accountability".

As a former Director-General of three Queensland Government departments Ms O'Donnell saw

from decades of political misuse and even attack; and they are weakening again."

QUT School of Justice lecturer Dr Mark Lauchs said the key legislative points that came out of Fitzgerald's report have had little effect because they have been watered down over time.

"Take Freedom of Information, effectively the government has the ability to ensure that if it has something it doesn't

want to release, it doesn't have to.

"There is no safety valve on that for the public because it is an absolute exemption.

"The Fitzgerald Inquiry took away the idea that everything was right with the world. It made everybody suspicious."

However Dr Lauchs said the Inquiry was not an indicator of a significant undercurrent of corruption because if that was the case, everything would have been covered up.

"That is not what it found and not what it was. If that was true then the Inquiry wouldn't have happened.

"The best initiative in Queensland as far as corruption prevention goes came from the Uniting Church, because it came from Noel Preston who argued for an Integrity Commissioner."

UQ academic John Harrison recalls Dr Preston was short-listed for the position, but the selection panel – Premier Peter Beattie, Catholic Archbishop John Battersby, and Premier's Department DG Glyn Davis – opted for a safe pair of hands, the recently retired Supreme Court Justice Alan Demack, a Uniting Church layperson from Rockhampton.

"I think they were a little afraid that Noel would take the job seriously and rock the boat.

"Premiers, archbishops and senior bureaucrats all have an aversion to meddlesome priests," said Dr Harrison.

"Regardless of the parties, we are heading back towards more of that 'trust me' style of governing," said Dr Lauchs.

"The churches' role as moral arbiters in society is to maintain the rage and be willing to have a say."

## The churches' role as moral arbiters ... is to maintain the rage and be willing to have a say

the benefits of the post-Fitzgerald changes but has been disappointed by the lack of adherence to such changes.

"The EARC was very open. Every submission sent to EARC was published," she said.

"This made dialogue possible. Yet this level of positive process has never been fully repeated.

"Under subsequent governments the powers of the CMC have been diminished; Freedom of Information watered down to the point that the whole system needed revamping; and some parts of government, such as government owned corporations are even less accountable."

Ms O'Donnell has other fears too. "I'm quite concerned about aggressive police powers."

"We've seen an increasing number and range of offences.

"Fitzgerald wanted increased checks and balances to ensure police good behaviour and this is no longer the case."

She also said that government decision-making was no longer open and accountable.

"Decisions are now largely made prior to going to the stakeholders. We need public policy dialogues."

Director of the UnitingCare Centre for Social Justice Greg Mackay said the State may be ready for another inquiry.

"I believe our institutions are once again so compromised that it is time for another Fitzgerald-style shake up," he said.

"As well as constant vigil we need to make our voices heard.

"We must not blindly believe all is well as if it is an article of faith; we need to know and be confident.

"Our democratic institutions were still highly vulnerable post-Fitzgerald having emerged



Counting the takings, date unknown. Photo courtesy of the Phil Dickie Investigative Journalism Collection. Fryer Library. The University of Queensland

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# Church ethics and corruption

By Mardi Lumsden

THE UNITING Church has always stood for social justice. It's in our denominational DNA. In the 1980s and 1990s our former denominations rallied - quite literally - against alcohol and prostitution.

From fighting for Indigenous land rights in the nineteen sixties, seventies and eighties, and upholding Tony Fitzgerald during his investigation into police corruption, to the fight today to keep 17-year-olds out of adult prisons, the Uniting Church has been an ethical watchdog.

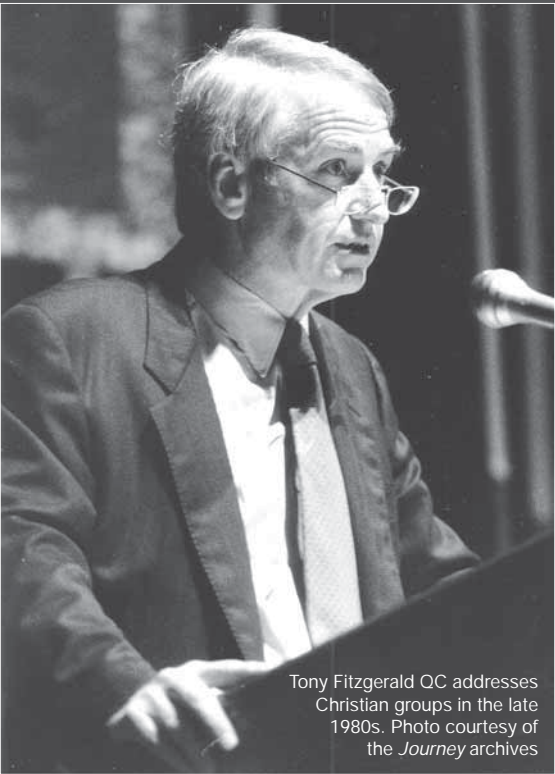
Ethicist and retired Uniting Church minister Rev Dr Noel Preston said the Christian faith has always inspired a passion for social justice.

"Christianity is a political faith," he said.

"It is about a way of life; the Christ way, which engages with the powers that be, as Jesus' way to the cross demonstrates.

"Christian belief must lead to the expression of a practical ethic if it is to have integrity. Central to that ethic will be a primary concern for the most disadvantaged."

Dr Preston said that while there may be a simple 'Christian line' when it came to some public policy, individuals needed to be active in issues of social justice.



Tony Fitzgerald QC addresses Christian groups in the late 1980s. Photo courtesy of the Journey archives

"We must engage, act and then reflect and learn for the next engagement," he said.

"The history of the Fitzgerald process and the issues around it, as well as the response or lack of response to it by people of faith, even 20 years on, provides a profound learning experience about Christian witness in society."

Former Uniting Church Social Justice Advocate (1988-2000) Mark Young agreed that there is still much to learn from the Fitzgerald Report and the years of corruption prior to it.

"The casualties were not only minority groups which dared to disagree, but also the integrity of the judiciary, government and parliament.

"The Fitzgerald Inquiry, and its ensuing reforms, clarified the boundaries between these three vital elements of democracy.

"I believe the churches' leadership and membership were able to contribute positively to Queensland's democratic renewal, whether it was done adeptly or otherwise.

"Two decades later it is still important for the institutions and professions of civil society including people of faith, to remain vigilant about the wellbeing of democracy."

Dr Preston said the Church's fight against corruption stemmed from Jesus' teaching to love your neighbour.

"There is every reason for Christians to be guardians against corruption and the abuse of power," he said.

"If we fail to challenge corruption we fail to love our neighbour.

"Just as the church is in constant need of reformation, so the Christian citizen works with God to constantly renew the world.

"I learnt from Reinhold Niebuhr that the conjunction of self-righteousness, self-delusional innocence and political power is a most dangerous mix.

"I have seen that mix in action in several periods of political history across my lifetime. In a real sense, that was the phenomenon Tony Fitzgerald uncovered in the Bjelke-Petersen years."

Dr Preston said people needed to be continually aware of potential corruption of power, in the community as well as in the church.

"Religious faith organisations are still learning about what it means to be democratic and transparent, that is, how power can be misused.

"We may be offended to think that corruption lurks behind church pillars, pulpits and curtains, but potentially it does.

"We should not forget that in the lead up to the Fitzgerald catharsis, historically the churches stood by and refused to question how the affairs of state were being run.

"The danger remains today that we are still basically on the sidelines, preoccupied with our own problems rather than engaging with the body politic.

"The call to repentance is at the heart of the Biblical message of the prophets - but only those who are prepared to examine themselves and make the changes we are called to, have the credibility to call others to repentance.

"So we (the church), as well as other parts of society, need to rehear Tony Fitzgerald's words at the conclusion of his report:

"Vigilance is constantly needed to name the vested interests which will avoid and subvert real reform while creating a new, attractive but hollow facade to hide the continuing misuse of power and misconduct."

# REFLECT

## The religious figure

By Don Whebell

SOMEONE RECENTLY recalled my first induction as Moderator in 1989 and that I'd said something like it was important that people read not only their Bibles, but the Fitzgerald Report - and discover what each had to say about the other.

It was not an entirely original statement.

Swiss theologian Karl Barth, in the midst of the turmoil of World War II said his own daily reading was the Bible and the daily newspaper.

He was calling on Christians to be aware of the realities of the world and the greater realities of the judgement of the word that God was speaking through Jesus Christ.

My first term as Moderator



Don Whebell graces the cover of The Courier Mail in October 1989

## The Social Justice A

By Mark Young

I WAS WORKING as the Synod's Social Responsibility officer when the Fitzgerald Report was submitted to the Queensland Parliament on 3 July 1989.

The Report followed a two year judicial inquiry, led by Tony Fitzgerald QC, and went some way towards restoring respect for democracy in Queensland.

One of the recommendations of the Fitzgerald Report was that the state should review its laws regarding voluntary sexual behaviour.

A Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee (CJC) was consequently commissioned to consider the proposed decriminalisation of homosexuality.

Churches were divided by the government's proposal.

The Uniting Synod Social Responsibility Committee agreed

that the existing legislation in Queensland discouraged homosexual men from coming forward for AIDS testing due to fear of prosecution.



Mark Young



# ELECTIONS

## The prisoner



Debbie Kilroy. Photo courtesy of Sisters Inside Inc

By Debbie Kilroy

I WAS IN Boggo Rd pre-Fitzgerald as a 17 and 18-year-old and then again just after Fitzgerald.

I watched Fitzgerald unfold, I got out of prison and my life changed. We started Sisters Inside. I studied social work and more recently became a lawyer.

Throughout all of this time I've watched and wondered just what happened about our dreams and hopes that what Fitzgerald was recommending would lead to a more compassionate, coherent, and sensible world. But somehow it hasn't.

Instead it seems to have come full circle to today. In fact I believe the way prison is, and the way we treat the most marginalised of our fellow citizens, is worse than before Fitzgerald.

In those days we knew that the people in prison were usually there because of serious offences.

In those days prison was brutal and bad stuff happened there.

Now it is much more difficult to expose the horrors being done and inflicted on people.

It is almost impossible to see it through the veneer offered by the marketing, the rules, the imagery, the public media, and the architecture of our new prisons.

Prisons look nice; people claim they are like resorts. This cannot be further from the truth.

Do you have any idea of what it would be like to lose your freedom, to be vulnerable to the whims of a system that brutalises?

People who were in prison when I was would go so far as to say we'd prefer the old Boggo Rd still be there, not because it was pleasant but because we could protest against the brutalisation, we could go on the rooftops, we could get information to visitors, the media had more access, as did lawyers and advocates.

It is time for us to think outside

the bars because the bars are dividing our community; they remove the marginalised and often the innocent.

We are now, more than ever, massively increasing the imprisonment of Aboriginal women, of people with mental illness, people who are poor, those struggling with alcohol and drugs, and even people with learning disabilities.

Now many people are there because our vast middle class doesn't want to look at those who are unsightly.

There were changes after Fitzgerald in the men's prison, it was obvious and stood out; management was changed, improvements started.

But not in the very small women's prison because it was not in the public eye, but after a murder in early 1990 changes came, including problem management.

Over the past few years I have seen a young Aboriginal woman (along with many others) ruined by the criminal justice system, but she is the most beautiful person with a great heart but who has been exposed to the system.

She is caught again and again by a system that is not oriented to rehabilitation but seemingly to ensuring people re-offend.

Now I am afraid that she has been broken by the system and no one sees it or understands it.

Is this what Fitzgerald wanted?

Debbie Kilroy was incarcerated at 13, a mother at 17, witness to a violent murder and jailed for drug trafficking at 28. 12 years later she was awarded the Order of Australia for her fearless campaign for the rights of women prisoners through her organisation Sisters Inside. In 2004 she was awarded the Australian Human Rights Medal and in 2008 was admitted as a lawyer

coincided with the release of the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct in Queensland.

The Commission, led by Tony Fitzgerald QC, created a wide-ranging debate about corruption in Queensland's public institutions.

The Synod met in October 1989 and issues that arose from the Enquiry were not far from our attention – nor from the concern of other churches.

The comment about reading the Bible and the Fitzgerald Report

was made in the sermon at the Synod gathering in Festival Hall.

It went ahead of me around the state and gave opportunities to try to encourage people to catch hold of the challenges confronting our society. Translating the sermon into action was the big job.

Jesus' message to the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4) was addressed also to us. The Gospel always is! And that wasn't terribly comforting.

The churches were, as always, in a situation that called us out of our comfort zones and into living Christ's Gospel in action.

We all knew that corruption existed, and that there was the occasional rogue in our institutions, but did little about it.

Fitzgerald made it very public.

People in the churches who spoke as prophets were often told to shut up and leave politics out of the pulpit.

Over many years, we'd heard the mantra from Premier Bjelke-Petersen and others in his Cabinet that the churches had no role in the public domain.

Debate about that followed me around the state, with many of our people responding.

Many people had been longing to see the church active in confronting the corruption exposed by the Fitzgerald Report.

Others in the church and the community were quite angry.

Some letters, mostly anonymous, were threatening: pretty disturbing when they're signed 'yours in Christ'!

On a personal level that was

in what the churches had to say about a piece of legislation.

Clearly there was politics afoot, but there was also a refreshingly open style of leadership, evidenced by the fact that the Parliamentary CJC held public hearings to consider the range of strongly held opinions.

In hindsight it was apparent that the government was divided about the concept of a Preamble, which tried to separate messages about personal morality from the process of repealing an inadequate law.

I am supposing that the Queensland Attorney-General at the time, Deane Wells MP (a former university lecturer in philosophy) and the young head of the Office of Premier and Cabinet, Kevin Rudd (less than a decade past his Student Christian Movement days at university) wanted 'clear air' in which the matter could be debated, free of the instinctive conservatism displayed in the 1970s and 1980s by the then Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen.



9. Image courtesy of Don Whebell

## Advocate

This was not a popular position amongst Uniting Church congregations, many of which preferred the stance taken by the Baptist, Presbyterian and Lutheran Churches in expressing complete opposition to law reform.

Ever mindful of the influence of the churches in matters of personal morality, the government took the unusual step of providing church leaders, including the Moderator of the Uniting Church and the Archbishop of the Anglican Church, with a preview of a Preamble to the proposed Bill.

This Preamble included a statement that "Parliament neither condones nor condemns the acts which cease to be criminal because of this legislation".

It was one of the few times during my involvement with Synod social responsibility matters (from 1988 to 2000) that the government of the day took a proactive interest

## Want to learn more?

### Listen

The Griffith University Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance Inaugural Tony Fitzgerald Lecture. Tuesday 28 July 2009, at the State Library of Queensland. Speaker will be Justice Arthur Chaskalson, former Chief Justice of South Africa

### Read

Daring to do what is right: the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. By Terence Copley Religious and Moral Education press, 2008

Read the Fitzgerald Report at [www.cmc.qld.gov.au](http://www.cmc.qld.gov.au)

# Telling tales helps grow faith

**FAITH STORIES**, the Queensland Synod's new resource for congregations, was launched in Redcliffe Uniting Church last month.

The eight week course, written by Duncan Macleod and Graham Beattie, features Redcliffe minister Peter Armstrong as the narrator, along with members of the congregation talking about the ways they started their journeys of faith.

Jacqui Le Roux grew up in a home where the word God was only used as a swear word.

At the age of 15 she noticed one of her friends had a natural way of talking with God. She remembers her friend asking God, "Please help us find a car park".

Ms Le Roux remembers thinking, "I didn't know you could talk to God like that".

She was shocked. She'd thought that God was a bit of a 'meanie' and a task driver. That prayer started Ms Le Roux on a journey discovering that she could talk to God as a friend.

Rob Williams went to Redcliffe Uniting Church four years ago with his wife to have their son Cameron baptised.

They discovered a community that offered more than they expected and stayed around to grow a faith with a new supportive family.

Greg Adsett has had a lifetime of involvement in the church.

His father, Graeme, is a Uniting Church minister.

Mr Adsett's commitment to follow God as a teenager was strengthened by the support of peers in his youth group and by observance of God changing lives in the drop-in centres they ran.

Peter Armstrong said he hasn't seen a course quite like *Faith Stories*.

"It is great to have a resource that connects our faith with listening skills, an awareness of what God is doing in the lives of people and a broad understanding of the gospel," he said.

"It's not a course instructing you on how to convert people.

*"Faith Stories* is about equipping Christians with the skills and knowledge they need to bring their best to their relationships.

"It's about deepening the



*Faith Stories* presenter Rev Peter Armstrong. Photo by Osker Lau

understanding of your faith and your life.

"It will encourage you to strengthen your relational networks with family, friends and the workplace, and in those contexts have the skills

and confidence to share your faith in effective and powerful ways."

The course is available as a DVD with eight short film segments and a printable participants' manual.

To order *Faith Stories* contact Vision for Mission Advocate Duncan Macleod at the Queensland Synod office on 07 3377 9809, 0439 828 718 or email [duncanm@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:duncanm@ucaqld.com.au)



Anonymous. John Calvin. 1550s.

## John Calvin's 500th Birthday

By Peter Lockhart

THIS JULY marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of one of the most influential theologians in the history and philosophy of the Uniting Church – John Calvin.

When Calvin's name is mentioned two things spring to mind for those with some understanding of church history: *The Institutes of Christian Religion* and the doctrine of predestination.

*The Institutes of Christian*

*Religion* is a monumental work of a Christian scholar who explored in detail and sought to explain the content of the faith.

The influence of his scholarship on much of the Protestant West should not be underestimated nor his impact on Western culture at large.

A few centuries after this publication economist Max Weber coined the phrase 'protestant work ethic' as a way of describing Calvin's impact.

Whether interpreted as Calvin intended or not his writings have continued to influence theology and the culture of the West for 500 years and are still worth reading.

Unfortunately, once the second of these issues is brought up often the discussion heads down a pathway that is very critical.

Often Calvin is misunderstood as placing predestination as the centrepiece of his theological enterprise.

Put simply, it was not. Rather, in defending the idea that God is utterly sovereign and utterly gracious Calvin was backed into a corner defending Paul's comments on predestination.

The thread of this theology runs from Jesus' words, "You

did not choose me I chose you", through Paul, to Augustine and into the Western theological tradition.

This tradition included the other Continental Reformers like Luther, Melancthon and Zwingli.

Despite this, whatever your view on this issue of predestination, I encourage you not to throw the baby out with the bathwater as John Calvin still has things for us to hear.

Remembering Calvin's birthday for me is to remember that he is one of the communion of saints.

He is one of that great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us.

Read out of their context and into our present reality through the power of the Holy Spirit when we listen to Calvin, just as we listen to any of the other faithful witnesses of the ages, the question must be asked, "Can we not hear God's eternal Word speaking to us the good news?"

I believe the answer to this is yes.

Peter Lockhart is minister at Clayfield Hamilton Uniting Church and lectures on Reform in the 16th Century at Trinity Theological College



### ARPA Communications Training Day 2009

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An activity of the Australasian Religious Press Association – Queensland Chapter



Read more about John Calvin at [www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org) or [www.historylearningsite.co.uk](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk)



# Food for nothing, any scraps for free

By Priscilla Raepom

WE LIVE in a world of great extremes. One of these is the increasing gap between food shortage and food wastage.

Hunger is a daily reality for many and according to Foodbank, the largest hunger relief organisation in Australia, two million Australians rely on food relief every year; half of whom are children.

In contrast Australians have a chronic habit of wasting food despite the global financial crisis and a hike in food prices.

Action group Do Something chairman Jon Dee was quoted earlier this year saying Australians waste about \$5 billion worth of food annually.

The government has been challenged to put mechanisms in place to better manage food wastage, but some individuals are employing alternative living strategies based on limited participation in the conventional economy and minimal consumption of resources.

This anti-consumerist lifestyle, called freeganism, started in the mid 1990s out of the anti-globalisation and environmentalist movements and is thriving in Australia.

'Freegans' salvage discarded unspoiled food or items from supermarket dumpsters for political reasons rather than out of need. This act is known as dumpster diving.

*Journey* caught up with seasoned 'dumpster diver' Thomas Day, a community development and arts worker with the Waiters Union Community Network in Brisbane to get an insight into the practice.

Mr Day said while it is important to remember that privileged people choose to seek food from bins, it is in itself an ironic luxury as those below the poverty line have been doing this for as long as supermarkets have existed.

***Journey:* How does a typical session work?**

**Thomas Day:** "There are different levels of commitment people make to 'liberating their potatoes'."

"In many places you can just reach into the bins, but in more posh suburbs they lock the bins."

"There are other choices to be made around the injustice of locked up food and the



The 'dumpster' food Thomas Day and a friend collected for his wedding. Photo courtesy of Thomas Day

process of removing locks to gain access to it.

"Even if you don't choose to take drastic measures it is an illegal act as the supermarkets see it as stealing."

"Typically we go after hours when shops are shut and have disposed of their 'waste' for the day."

**J: Why dumpster dive?**

**TD:** "The level of food waste from urban supermarkets is unjust and amounts to criminality."

"There are over two million people living in poverty in Australia, not to mention the fourth world conditions many Aboriginal people are still allowed to live in."

"I try to get wasted food to people who need it in our neighbourhood, which is what the Food Not Bombs movement does."

**J: Do you have a dumpster diving highlight?**

**TD:** "We have salvaged 10kg bags of rice thrown out because of a small tear in the bag, whole boxes of organic fruit, around 5kg of chocolate one time, and lots of cheese."

"Also, catering our entire wedding with dumpster food was a pretty amazing experience."

"I work as a wedding photographer and see a lot of money and waste that goes into weddings."

"The cost of the average Australian wedding now ranges between \$25 000 and \$40 000."

"There is nothing wrong with wanting your wedding to be an unforgettable day, but my wife

The level of food waste from supermarkets is unjust and amounts to criminality.

and I were interested in ways that we could do that which didn't bankrupt us, or our families."

"The guests thought that the oven baked pizzas were the best they'd ever tasted."

"We got everything apart from the vegan wedding cake from the bin."

**J: Have you had any challenges?**

**TD:** "Many supermarkets are against you going through their bins."

"There are public health and insurance issues involved."

"Most staff who might catch you are fine. They are forced to throw away all this good food so they're probably sympathetic."

"Management or security guards are rarely interested in the social justice reasons for taking food from bins."

**J: What is your role in the Waiters Union community orientation course?**

**TD:** "I facilitate workshops on activism, non-violence and peacemaking as part of the course, which is an opportunity for small groups to come and live with us in West End and experience a range of ways that people are trying to serve in this community."

"We take people dumpster diving as part of a community course and last year we took a teacher, nurse and social worker to the bins for the first time."

**J: What could the government do about the \$5 billion of food wasted annually in Australia?**

**TD:** "I'm not sure it is just the government's job."

"When it comes to food and community, deferring to the government only increases a lack of personal responsibility and

involvement from individuals; but that's a bigger issue."

"Practicality, the government could charge businesses more for waste which would force them, if only for financial reasons, to put perishable foods on special or look at more creative ways of using them."

"Government and councils could also assist in setting up an effective network for swift distribution of 'wasted' food."

**J: What could individuals, restaurants and supermarkets do?**

**TD:** "I think it's hard for institutions that have to meet the unrealistic consumer expectations such as 'we don't like yellowy garlic'."

"Some links in the chain of waste can be cut if people buy their food from local businesses."

"Supermarkets could partner with local restaurants, or run affordable cafes as part of their supermarkets, selling daily specials based around food that would otherwise be wasted."

"Ultimately, stronger, localised communities based on more than merely financial transactions are the solution."

*NB: All views expressed in this article are those of the interviewees alone.*

## July 5 NAIDOC Church Service

Jagera Arts Hall, 121 Cordelia St, South Brisbane



Georgia Corowa. Photo courtesy of Queensland Churches Together

The annual NAIDOC Spiritual Gathering Church Service is a time to rejoice and share in the joy of Indigenous culture and faith.

Come celebrate and pray for the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee week (5-12 July).

For more information contact Georgia Corowa on 3369 6792, email [ctipp@qct.org.au](mailto:ctipp@qct.org.au) or visit [www.naidoc.org.au](http://www.naidoc.org.au).

**July 4, 12 noon. Camps Farthest Out & South Pacific Regional Jubilee Celebration**, Grace College, Walcott Street, St Lucia, Brisbane. Contact Jan Maxwell on 3848 6833 or [janmax1@optusnet.com.au](mailto:janmax1@optusnet.com.au) or Colin H Ray on 3359 4829 or [gwencol@bigpond.net.au](mailto:gwencol@bigpond.net.au).

**July 6-11, South Pacific Regional Golden Jubilee Camp**, Grace College, University of Queensland, Brisbane. Contact Jan Maxwell on 3848 6833 or [janmax1@optusnet.com.au](mailto:janmax1@optusnet.com.au).

**July 16, 7pm-9pm. Australian Christian Meditation Community Qld** talk on Silent Prayer and Contemplative Living, Marymac Community Centre, 616 Ipswich Road, Annerley, Brisbane. Cost \$20. Registration and payment required by Friday 3 July. Contact Gabby Nelson on 3711 4227.

**July 18, 9am-2pm. Chermide Kedron Village Fair**, Chermide-Kedron Community Uniting Church, cnr Gympie and Rode Rds. Contact Kendall Yates on 3359 0975 or [yateskj@gmail.com](mailto:yateskj@gmail.com).

**July 19, 9am-11am. Trinity Ipswich White Sunday Anniversary**, Trinity Ipswich Congregation. All welcome. For more information contact Vilami Mila on 3812 3110 or [vilami\\_anamila@bigpond.com](mailto:vilami_anamila@bigpond.com).

**July 19, 2pm-4pm. Pet Dedication Service**, Thorneside Uniting Church, John Street. All creatures great and small. Bring your pets for a special blessing. Contact Rev Bruce Warren on 3207 2756 or [slmbrucew@iprimus.com.au](mailto:slmbrucew@iprimus.com.au).

**July 27, 10am-12:30am. Moreton Rivers Presbytery Adult Fellowship**, Sandgate Uniting Church, 116 Board Street, Deagon. RSVP numbers for catering by 22 July to Lorna Holt on 3865 8896 or [ronandlorna@bigpond.com](mailto:ronandlorna@bigpond.com).

**Aug 1, 9am-11am. Trinity Ipswich Anniversary Service**, Trinity Ipswich Congregation. For more information contact Vilami Mila on 3812 3110 or [vilami\\_anamila@bigpond.com](mailto:vilami_anamila@bigpond.com).

**Aug 5, 10am-3pm. Australian Christian Meditation Community Day of Silent Prayer and Quiet Reflection**, Brookfield Centre, 139 Brookfield Road, Kenmore Hills. Cost \$15. Contact Gabby Nelson on 371 4227 or [toga@bigpond.net.au](mailto:toga@bigpond.net.au).

**Aug 8, 9am-1pm. Northside Community Fair**, Northside Uniting Church, Andergrove, Mackay. Contact Zelma Wasson on 4942 1613 or [zelmaw@bigpond.com](mailto:zelmaw@bigpond.com).

**Aug 29, 7am-2pm. Paddle Adventure**, Baffle Creek, located one hour north of Bundaberg, between the Discovery Coast and Coral Coast regions of Wide Bay in Southeast Queensland. Closing date for entries is 31 July. Entry fee will apply. Contact John McIntyre on 4154 2863 or [themacs@internode.on.net](mailto:themacs@internode.on.net).

**Sep 10-12, 9am-3:30am. Laidley Uniting Church Quilt and Craft Expo**, Laidley Uniting Church Patrick Street, Laidley. Contact Robyn Muller on 5466 5436 (A/H) or email [rob.mul@bigpond](mailto:rob.mul@bigpond) for further information.

**Sep 12, 8am-1pm. Elanora Uniting Church Spring Fair and Flower Show**, Elanora Uniting Church. Official opening 10am by Rev Ian Lord. Contact Mary Flynn on 5598 8733 or [flynn10@bigpond.com](mailto:flynn10@bigpond.com).

Upload your 'What's On' entries at [www.journeyonline.com.au](http://www.journeyonline.com.au). Items may be shortened due to space limitations.

## Blue Care rethinks for the environment

BLUE CARE launched its own Sustainability Principles on 5 June, guiding how the organisation will operate to protect the environment and remain viable into the future.

Blue Care director of mission Colleen Geyer said the principles: responsibility, integration, innovation and collaboration, together with Blue Care's organisational values, called on

staff to act wisely as community and global citizens.

"Sustainability is about improving the quality of life for everyone in a fair and equitable way for present and future generations," she said.

"This means using resources responsibly and efficiently to minimise the demands placed on our planet."



Blue Care Sustainability Task Group celebrate the launch of the Sustainability Principles - Adrian English, Colleen Geyer, Mark Stephens, Janet Pond, and Amy Smith. Photo by Blue Care

## 50 year ordination

A SERVICE of thanksgiving was held at Chermide-Kedron Uniting Church on 22 June for 19 ministers who celebrate their Golden Jubilee of ordination this year.

Rev Gregor Henderson congratulated Syd Abrahams, Bill Adams, Barry Dangerfield, Noel

Davis, Jack Frewen-Lord, John Gillanders, John Mavor, Ron Potter, Trevor Quant, Ed Smith, and Nevin Stoddart attended.

Ian Russell, George Grimmer, Evan Jones, and Don Kassel were unable to attend.

Marcel Spengler, Roy Nugent, Ernie Jensen, Vic Elledge, and Ossie Dale have passed away.

## Sandgate flourishes

FLORAL ARTIST Robert Manton (below) helped Sandgate Uniting Church celebrate the 150th birthday of the state of Queensland in May.

A program of sacred and secular music with poetry by Rev Barbara Bailey complemented Mr Manton's colourful floral arrangements.

The afternoon was a true celebration of the state of Queensland and its many talented people.



Photo courtesy of Jean Kirkegaard





# Angels & Demons

Directed by Ron Howard, Running time 138 minutes, Rated M

Reviewed by Joanne Styles, a freelance writer based on the Sunshine Coast.

*ANGELS & DEMONS* is an action-packed adventure taking the audience on a thrilling chase across Rome and inside the Vatican City.

Based on the novel by Dan Brown, author of the controversial *The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels & Demons* is somewhat less controversial and more Hollywood entertainment.

Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon (Tom Hanks) is recruited by Italian police to help find four captured catholic leaders who are in line to become the next pope.

Langdon finds proof that the legendary secret society, the Illuminati, is still operating and could be the group responsible for the captured leaders.

From here the film turns into an epic race against the clock as Langdon, accompanied by an attractive Swiss scientist (Ayelet Zurer), decipher ancient symbols that lead them to where the next catholic leader will be murdered.

The film is full of twists and unexpected turns with a few gruesome scenes.

However the heart of the film explores the relationship between religion and science and the battle that often wages between a person's head and what their heart is telling them.

This film might not be to everyone's liking but in the very least it will make you want to pack your bags and head to Rome, pronto.



## Joy in Disguise: Meeting Jesus in the Dark Times

By Edward S. Little, Morehouse Publishing, 2009, RRP \$39.95

Reviewed by Rev Anneli Sinkko, a retired Uniting Church minister.

*JOY IN Disguise* came to me as a 'lucky dip' which I randomly selected from the UC Information list.

I actually wanted to review a book on theology because I am not too fond of devotional books.

Little did I know that this book was more than theology, more than devotion, more than meditation – it is all of these – and more.

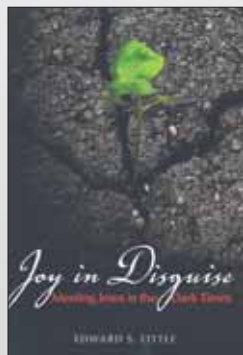
How could I describe this treasure in disguise!

For me it is a meditative study for serious everyday scholars on Paul's letter to the church in Philippi. I was surprised by the joy it gave me.

The text of Paul's letter is given scholarly interpretation mingled with love and the author leads the reader through tricky Greek words without belittling the inadequacies of the reader.

*Joy in Disguise* is garnished with personal memories from the author's extensive pastoral ministry and it must be said that anybody who is serious about their preaching the Word should take note: all the stories narrated give light to the point the author wants to make.

Reading this book is a thoroughly enjoyable experience and I would recommend it – joyfully.



## Ethics in the Global Village - Moral Insights for the Post 9-11 USA

By Jack A. Hill, Polebridge Press, 2008, RRP \$39.95

Reviewed by Rev Dr Noel Park, a retired minister within the Nambour congregation.

SOME YEARS ago the program *Spring and Fall* on ABC TV included an episode devoted to the work of the late Fr Ted Kennedy at the Redfern Catholic Church in Sydney.

Fr Kennedy had made the presbytery available to Indigenous men and woman from the area and referred to himself as a "guest" in the old house.

One of Fr Kennedy's statements was that if we wish to know Christ we must go to the place where the poor are.

A very similar theme underlies the writing of Professor Jack Hill. He has produced a book which could well be used in discussion groups as well as for informative reading. Each chapter concludes with questions and 'talking points'

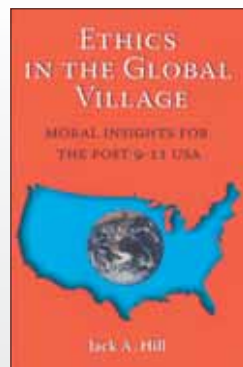
which tease out the issues raised in that chapter.

Prof Hill sets out to take the statements attributed to the historical Jesus and set them within a contemporary life setting.

He uses many of his own experiences, such as his years in South Africa and in Jamaica, as well as in post 9-11 USA to create images of real life in the postmodern age. This process raises many important issues about the "Christian" response to poverty, racial discrimination and disadvantage in contemporary society.

Whether or not this book achieves the cover claim of "Joining the dots between what Jesus said long ago and what we experience today –" is up to each reader to decide.

It certainly made me stretch



my thinking in that regard.

Prof Hill's search for reconnection in our modern society may be something of a modern version of Buber's "I-Thou" but it would facilitate some extremely valuable discussion in local study groups or workshops.

*Ethics in the Global Village* is a book worthy of a place on bookshelves of all Christians who take a serious interest in the ethics of community, social status or international relations.

## Does God live in the suburbs? What ordinary people believe

By Myer Bloom, Indra Publishing, 2007, RRP \$34.95

Reviewed by Rev Linda Hanson, minister with the Cooroy Pomona Uniting Church.

WHEN I read the title of this book I was expecting a book on whether Christianity was alive and well in the suburbs and how it is viewed in today's society.

Instead, as the title suggests, the book is about what ordinary people of all walks of life believe.

The 23 chapters each deal with a different religion (eg Buddhism) or denomination in the Christian church.

Chapters are in alphabetical order of faith grouping.

As a Uniting Church member I naturally read that chapter first, even though it was the last chapter in the book.

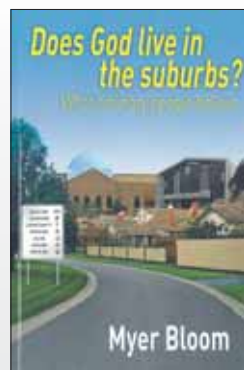
Each chapter is based on an interview with one practising

adherent of that faith group. The interviewee was usually a lay person and they were asked to speak for themselves and not for the organisation they are a part of, thus the observations mentioned may differ from official views.

Margaret Watson from Victoria was interviewed for the chapter on our denomination, thus her description of structures was different to Queensland Synod structures.

Even though the book was published in 2007, the information gathered was quite old referring to Parish Councils and the Synod of Victoria (not including Tasmania).

I mention this as if this information is out of date; the same might be said for the other chapters.



Otherwise the information given was a fair reflection of life in the Uniting Church.

*Does God live in the suburbs?* was easy to read.

Readers will find this an easy to comprehend survey of the different religions and denominations in Australia.

The book achieves what it sets out to do – provide an overview of the beliefs of ordinary people in Australia.

More reviews online at [www.journeyonline.com.au](http://www.journeyonline.com.au) including:

### Eco-Theology

By Celia Deane-Drummond, Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2008, RRP \$59.95



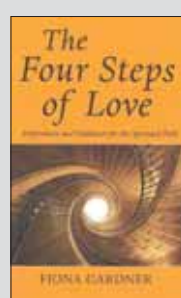
### Making a Pilgrimage

By Sally Welch, Lion Hudson, 2009 RRP \$12.95



### The Four Steps of Love

By Fiona Gardner, Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008 RRP \$37.95



## Books reviewed available from ...

Many of the titles reviewed in *Journey* are available from C.M.S Bookstore, St Paul's Bookstore, or Christian Supplies in Brisbane city. Books can usually be ordered from Vision Books at Broadwater Road Uniting Church, Mansfield, or may be available from [www.mosaicresources.com.au](http://www.mosaicresources.com.au)

# Trinity seeks world vision

TRINITY WILSTON Uniting Church members have been busy during May creating awareness of issues regarding poverty and the environment.

At one event the congregation hosted World Vision Director Tim Costello who spoke about the changing values of different generations, the impact of global warming on poverty and the plight of those living in poverty.

Minister Rev Sue Pickering said people donated around \$700 for the Kochore Safe Motherhood and Women's Health Project in Jima, Ethiopia.

"As an AusAID supported project these funds will be matched three times by the AusAID scheme," she said.

"It was great to see so many people in the church. There were people from the local community as well as other churches who have an interest in the work of World Vision and the plight of people living in extreme poverty."

On 30 May the Brisbane Symphonic Band put on a

children's concert in association with the congregation. While the band entertained the children with their Fairy Tales and Fantasy theme (complete with face painter), congregation members took the opportunity to raise awareness of UN Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 (Maternal Health and Childhood Mortality).

Coles Newmarket pitched in to provide food for a sausage sizzle with all proceeds donated to the Kochore Safe Motherhood and Women's Health Centre in Ethiopia.

World Vision also donated a Fairtrade Football as the prize for a colouring competition judged by local member Stirling Hinchliffe.

Ms Pickering said the band and the Church have agreed to make the Children's Concert an annual event.

Trinity Wilston is also awaiting official certification to be a registered Fair Trade Faith Community. They would be only the second in Queensland.



Trinity Wilston members Yvonne Liekefett and Barbara Irvine with World Vision worker Steph. Photo by Sue Pickering

## Sunday 5 July: Atherton

*FAITH IN Christ, Bearers of Hope, Called to Love* is the motto of the Atherton Uniting Church. Our worship centre and ministry base sits in the heart of the beautiful Atherton Tablelands. The congregation however is drawn from within a 25km radius of Atherton and members come from several other local communities including Malanda, Yungaburra, Herberton and Walkamin so we are really a regional church.

The congregation is made up of a majority of retirees and we have only a few strongly connected families and therefore small numbers of children and youth, despite an intentional missional focus to this group. While our local mission field spans several communities our main focus has been on the Atherton community (pop. about 7500) where we have developed a strong partnership with the local primary school.

Our full time minister Rev Leo Newell, is honorary chaplain to the school and takes the upper year levels for Religious Education. We also run a Kids Hope Australia program in the school, mentoring at-risk children.

Our broader missional initiatives include running Focus on the Family's 'How to Drug Proof Your Kids' courses and 'Journeys'.

Our congregation is also the driving force behind Atherton Tablelands Carols by Candlelight, an event growing in popularity each year, attracting over 1500 patrons in 2008.

Our latest initiative is a youth focused Friday night worship event called 'Xtreme worship.' This is being well supported and has already become multi-denominational.

On 18 and 19 July we will host singer / songwriter / communicator Alik, one of Australia's most dynamic Christian female artists.

We value the prayers of the wider church for these initiatives.

# Connecting with the heart

By Priscilla Raepom

SOUTHPORT UNITING on the Gold Coast is wrestling with how it can connect with the diverse groups of people including CBD workers, overseas students, retirees, families and singles in its community.

The church located in the CBD of a rapidly growing city has a mission statement and that is: 'connecting with the heart'.

Minister Rev Sue Page said isolation was a big issue in the area.

"People often move to the Gold Coast to start a new life, but they move away from their support network of family and friends.

"The Church is in a position to extend a hand of friendship and offer hospitality with the love and compassion of Christ."

The Church has set up new connect groups, opened its doors to the public and is looking at refurbishing its foyer to allow for a more spacious reception area.

"The 4Cs (Craft, Cuppa, Conversation Corner) is an activity targeted at connecting with older people.

"Playgroup is connecting with mothers looking for



Playgroup enables mothers to network and children to enjoy activities with others. Photo by Priscilla Raepom

friendship and have babies or toddlers who need to have some activity or connection with other children."

Ms Page said Open Church provided a venue for people who needed to be in a church to reflect; for those who were lonely or in crisis and needed someone to talk to; or for those who needed emergency relief hampers.

"This is certainly an area, which we would like to develop a lot more ... we have contact

every day with people who are homeless and marginalised.

"With the financial crisis there will be more and more people in need and during winter the homeless population in Queensland increases because people down south move north because it's warmer here.

"The question is how do we build on the connections we are making with people; how do we link this to the life of faith ... it is a big challenge to think about," she said.

## Vale Clare Preston

A CONGREGATION of 300 celebrated the life of Clare Preston in April at the Mt Pleasant Uniting Church.

Ms Preston died in

Melbourne aged 94. She was the widow of Rev Arthur Preston AO, Superintendent of the West End Methodist Mission (1948-63) and a founder of the Blue Nursing Service.

A gathering to give thanks

for Clare's life will be held on 18 July, 2.30-4pm at the West End Uniting Church. For catering purposes and further information contact Estelle Godfrey on 3844 5422 or Shirley Foote on 3349 7524.

## Sunday 19 July: St. Stephen's Toowoomba

ST. STEPHEN'S Toowoomba is a church in the heart of the city.

We have an average attendance of over 100, but there are probably well over 1000 people in Toowoomba and the district who would regard St. Stephen's as their church.

The congregation is mostly older but there are a few young families who are a vital part of its life.

As a church in the centre of a growing city we are trying to explore how we can take advantage of our location and build bridges with the community.

We are a mostly traditional congregation but have incorporated some more contemporary elements in our worship.

As with all older congregations there are significant pastoral issues related to ageing, illness and grief.

Please pray:

- For the congregation as it seeks to broaden its outreach
- For our Elders and Andrew our minister as they seek to widen the outreach of our Church

- To ask God to help us to discern how to make best use of our property, position and personnel

- To give thanks to God for nearly 150 years of faithful worship, witness and service, including the beginnings of Lifeline and Meals on Wheels on the Darling Downs

- For the congregation and leadership as they seek to deal with the issues of loss and grief that confront all older congregations and

- For our young families asking that the faith of their children may grow to maturity in Christ.





# Proposed Preamble changes a concern

I wish to raise my concern over the proposal that will come before the 12th Assembly from Congress (UAICC), seeking to make changes to the Preamble to the constitution of The Uniting Church in Australia.

My concern is twofold.

1) Process: There is no detailed statement and explanation of the history giving rise to the proposed change.

The statement contains no discussion or explanation of the benefits and disadvantages of making such a change or the impact of making or not making such an important amendment to the constitution.

More time is required to discuss this vital matter across the whole Church.

2) Theology: Perhaps more importantly, this is the theological issue.

It is stated in the report to the Assembly by Congress that the significance of the proposed Preamble is "the realisation that God might have been speaking directly to Indigenous Australians for many millennia, well before the days of Noah or Abraham, was hardly a consideration. But this is the

view of Congress ... this is the historical truth as we see it and which we are now asking non-Indigenous members of the UCA to acknowledge through the proposed Preamble".

God may have been speaking to Indigenous Australians for many millennia, but this knowledge or revelation is only a 'partial' revelation and it is only in Jesus Christ that we can come to a fuller revelation of who God is.

The Preamble must point to this reality as Christ alone is at the centre of the Church's identity, not our own particular experience of God.

The *Basis of Union* does this well as it is the theological Preamble to the Constitution.

It is why Congress and the wider Church can therefore say that we seek 'to unite in one fellowship all Aboriginal and Islander Christians who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord, accept the authority of the Scriptures and desire to follow and serve Christ as his disciples' (Congress website).

Rev Dr Hedley Fihaki  
Cairns Emmanuel



## Taking to the streets

In the June *Journey*, Helen Prior shared the attitude changing experience she had when invited to go on a street retreat.

She confessed that she was confronted with issues that most never even consider.

Voluntarily sharing the streets with the alienated, marginalised and disenfranchised while abandoning the common rights to hygiene, adequate food plus comfortable and safe sleeping arrangements is definitely not everyone's cup of tea.

Survival on the streets is not as romantic as Hollywood has portrayed it time and time again.

Survival is simply being street-smart with no measurable future.

When I invited Helen to join me on this retreat, she quickly saw the potential to overcome her false pride and then actively recruited several more retreat mates.

When the time is right, we will take to the streets.

Eido McIntyre  
Email



## More to learn

I can almost identify with all our moderator is saying in his article 'Learning Faith' (June *Journey*) but there are some insights that might bring us closer to an understanding of the enormous task facing us.

According to my theological knowledge ... the word 'faith' can also be translated as 'trust'.

Faith therefore, as a word, is a little ambiguous.

Over the years I have also learned that the 'mind' is fragile.

Look for instance at what Hitler and his masters of propaganda did to the German nation.

How long has it taken the major churches to accept the facts of evolution and that the earth does not stand still and never did.

Science and religion have to be reconciled.

Who dares to state that only spiritual truths come from God?

Surely scientific knowledge also emanates from God.

At least Newton would have agreed with that.

The vision of the world of science sees way beyond the vision of the creationist and fundamentalist.

Therefore the expression 'with all your mind' is also a little ambiguous as the scientific mind and the fundamentalist mind are often in opposite transits and poles apart.

Is an 'informed' faith preached in our churches?

I would say no and this is the reason why there is so much opposition to Spong and McNab.

The church must come down to earth in regard to this question.

The truth and nothing but the truth, scientific and spiritual, will do.

Reconciliation at all levels must take place and can take place if we are prepared to open our minds to all truths.

Love and truth are the weapons we need.

Len Notenboom  
Elanora



## Working for the future of the Church

The letter from Marjorie Butler in last month's *Journey* suggests or implies some concern or suspicion about the Lay Forum and progressive Christianity generally.

We in the Lay Forum would like to take this opportunity to assure Marjorie that we are not trying to convert anyone in the Uniting Church to any other set of beliefs or start a new church or a power group within our church.

We sincerely affirm Marjorie and others who remember their Sunday school days with such respect and affection.

Those of us who use the term 'progressive' have respect for our Christian traditions.

However, we believe that we need to recognise that our church denomination is in long-term decline due to its failure to come to grips with the huge social and educational changes of recent generations.

We must relate the story of Jesus in a way that will communicate with those we meet in our daily lives.

As a church we must engage in a free, open and honest discussion about our beliefs, employ a tolerance that accepts and encourages a wide diversity of theological opinion and practices which will make sense and attract the missing younger generations.

The Lay Forum is simply trying to create a space for these progressive thoughts and approaches in the Uniting Church, which currently has little time and space for this important activity in favour of defending what may have been helpful in yesterday's church.

We are a group of Christian men and women concerned to recognise the need for a better long term future for our church.

Graeme Adsett  
Retired UCA  
Minister  
Karalee



## Education is social justice

I appreciated the June *Journey* with its emphasis on education.

It was good to hear of the role of our church schools and the attention and care they receive to do their very important work.

However, I wish to point out that education is for us also a matter of social justice.

We should be concerned not only for the welfare of our own but also for the needs also of the whole Australian community.

Education means justice.

The three churches that made up the Uniting Church in 1977 all brought with them a tradition of support for the public education system that has been a major contributor to the egalitarianism of this country.

When the Uniting Church came into being it did so with a strong concern for the whole of society with the recognition that Australia has a responsibility to give all our children full educational opportunities.

I hope that we shall never forget that part of our educational task.

It was William Temple who said that "the church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members".

I am proud of the contribution our church schools make today but we must never ignore those multitudes of young Australians who deserve a fair go.

Bill Adams  
Jindalee



## Gen Y respond to Easter msg

Year 8 religion students from South Burnett Catholic College were excited to read the 'Easter for Gen Y' edition of *Journey*, complete with a faux Facebook page for Jesus.

Here is a contribution from students Eileen Cobbo and Paige Davis.

Many thanks to their teacher Bronwyn Langford for sending it in.

Paige: OMG did you hear that Jesus has been kidnapped.

Eileen: OMG really = (

Paige: Yeh, Mary called me last night to tell me the news, she was really upset = (

Eileen: Hey, do you know about it?

Paige: Only what Mary told me, she said that he was

walking down the street and then these bunch of Gang-Bashers walk up and bashed him then they put him in the van.

Eileen: Does Mary know where he was kidnapped, and by who?

Paige: No, she has no idea she was really upset though = (

Eileen: We should go to the scene of the crime and be like NCIS people =)

Paige: OMG that would so fun we should totally do that =)

Eileen: Get all your gear and be at the Yellow Duck at 7 pm

Paige: Ohk, I'll see you there

Bye xxoo mwah

Eileen: Ohk, bring your walkie talkie

Bye, love you xxoo mwah

## CLASSIFIEDS

### For Sale

Kawana Wts - 2 x slatted pews 2.7m - fair cond. 1 x polished timber communion table 90x1.5m (suit dining table) - make an offer. 7 x unopened ctns 40 Days of Purpose resources - \$60 ea. Call Rosemary 5493 8739 Mon to Fri 9am to 12 noon.

Email your classified advertisements to [mardl.lumsden@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:mardl.lumsden@ucaqld.com.au)

### Accommodation

**Holiday unit**, modern, pool. 100m from Kings Beach Caloundra from \$360/wk. Ph Ray 0427990161.

**London B & B**. Easy city access; lge double room, ensuite, self-catering. Reas rates. [rachel@brockleybandb.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:rachel@brockleybandb.fsnet.co.uk) Ph/Fax: 001144.2086946538.

Send your letters to [journey@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:journey@ucaqld.com.au) or Journey GPO Box 674, Brisbane QLD 4001.

Letters may be edited due to space limitations.

# What impact did the Fitzgerald Inquiry have on your life and work?



## Noel Preston

MY PERSONAL experience of what I call the Fitzgerald phenomenon goes back to the 1970s.

I had been studying social ethics at Boston University School of Theology which confirmed in me a vocation to a specialised ministry in social justice and ethical issues.

The Methodist Church appointed me Associate Minister at the city church (now Wesley Mission) and Convenor of the statewide Christian Citizenship committee, mandating a prophetic role in the context of what was a volatile political and moral era in Queensland, fuelled by the Bjelke-Petersen government's style.

As events played out, personally and for the infant Uniting Church, some of us experienced the conflict between church and state and the personal anguish of public criticism, even from Christian colleagues.

We were confronted by unjust policies, corruption and the abuse of power.

To stay silent seemed an abandonment of the church's mission in the world.

Our core motivation was to provide an alternative witness to Christ in the world, especially as the government of the day and many of its supporters claimed that they were defending the Christian cause against social evil.

Our heroes were Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King, and our credo Liberation theology.

The Fitzgerald Inquiry opened the way for a new start for Queensland democracy and social policy.

At the time I thought a lot about what this meant in terms of personal and social repentance and redemption.

As Fitzgerald predicted, and as we know from our Christian understanding

of human nature, the reforms would be constantly threatened.

The struggle is never over.

By 1989 my vocation had evolved back into a university role.

The post-Fitzgerald context provided a good opportunity to teach, research and publicly propose ethics programs.

In a sense what was a watershed in Queensland's history gave me personally the impetus to translate Christian social ethics into forums outside the church.

Noel Preston has written more extensively of this story in his book *Beyond the Boundary: a memoir exploring ethics, politics and spirituality* with a Foreword by Tony Fitzgerald. This may be obtained by contacting Dr Preston on N.Preston@griffith.edu.au or Zeus Publications.

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

## John Woodley

EARLY IN 1985 South East Queensland suffered weeks of power blackouts due to a dispute between electricity workers and the state government over safety and other issues in the power industry.

The government sacked 1000 of the workers, including an active member of the Uniting Church, and cancelled their superannuation and other entitlements.

A decision was made by Concerned Christians, an ecumenical group of clergy and lay people, to join the workers at pickets outside SEQEB depots.

At the New Farm SEQEB depot one morning 100 picketers were arrested, including members of Concerned Christians.

The large cross they had been standing under was confiscated by police.

In Court the main prosecution case was that the Concerned Christians were associating with striking workers who had broken the law.

Concerned Christians defence lawyer Myles McGregor Lowndes engaged Tony Fitzgerald as Barrister.

In their defence Tony Fitzgerald used a number of historic precedents to point to the absurdity of denying Christians the right to stand with the vulnerable and outcast.

He asked what such a denial might mean to Mother Teresa in India, who to avoid being associated with the poor and suffering would need to drive around in a

car and throw packets of sandwiches out of the window.

The Concerned Christians were acquitted and a valuable lesson in Christian social justice was reinforced: the call to stand with and for those oppressed by powerful forces, even governments.

Four years later the Report of the Fitzgerald Inquiry was published and the government defeated in the subsequent election.



Rev John Woodley is a Uniting Church minister who served as a Senator for the Australian Democrats from 1993 to 2001 and has a passion for social justice.

## John Harrison

REPENT. JUST one word on the cover of *Journey* in March 1989 as the revelations about police and political corruption in Queensland reached a crescendo.

As the then editor of *Journey*, I had to see we reported the issues with theological integrity, rather than political partisanship, while avoiding the legal minefields of *sub judice* and contempt.

But the bigger thrills and spills came from being media minder for the Moderator and Synod Secretary.

Church leaders were determinedly behind Fitzgerald. After all, we'd pressured the Government to set it up. In 1986, "Minister for Everything" Russ Hinze, a long-time member of Pimpama church, was asked at a media conference about the brothels in the Valley. Russ replied: "Brothels? What brothels?"

The comment was received by the assembled hacks with raucous laughter.

When this was broadcast on the TV news that night, I drafted a media release suggesting the government was taking a "frivolous" approach to a serious social problem.

After a decade of coping a beating from Joh on social justice issues, we were on the moral high ground; none of this left-wing stuff about peace, land rights or civil liberties.

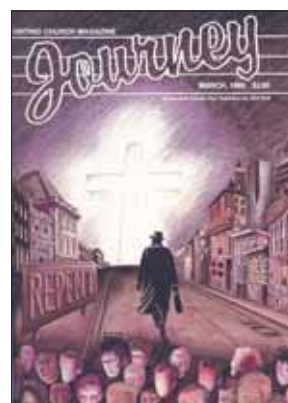
"Social purity" had been on the Brisbane Methodist Conference and Presbyterian Assemblies agenda since the 1880s.

Moderator Barry Dangerfield was at Arukun, so Synod Secretary Duncan Harrison made the statement to media.

A few minutes after it hit *Ten News*, a furious Acting Premier Bill Gunn was on the phone giving Mr Harrison a blast.

Threatening to walk away from his lifetime membership of the Uniting Church, Mr Gunn complained the church had delivered him into the hands of the enemies of the government.

Ten days later, while Joh was visiting Disneyland, Mr Gunn appointed Fitzgerald. And the rest is history.



John Harrison is an author and lectures in strategic communications at the University of Queensland.

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